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The following report is compiled from two of Carl Haines' bi-monthly reports to the Iraq Department of Antiquities and a letter which is sent to members of the Oriental Institute just as this letter goes out to members of the ASOR. To Carl go our thanks for this account of the first month's work, and a very successful four weeks it was, of the new 1960-61 season at Nippur.

This is the seventh campaign at Nippur since World War II and the fourth in which the Baghdad School has cooperated with the Oriental Institute.

—V. E. C.

Dear Friends:

After an absence of two and one-half years the Joint Expedition to Nippur is back in the field. Only three of us are here at the moment: Don Hansen who came directly from a summer's digging at Sardis in Turkey, Jim Knudstad who was in Egypt and Iran last winter and who is back again after a stay of less than three months in the States, and I. On the first of December we will be joined by George Dales who is now in Pakistan, and in the spring we are expecting Vaughn Crawford, the director of the Baghdad School. With the exception of Professor Coetze of Yale University who unfortunately could not come out this year, it is the same staff that was here during the 1957-58 season. Our objective is also the same--the excavation of the Inanna temple.

Luckily Abdullah Sultan, a member of household staffs of Oriental Institute expeditions since the early 1930's was able to rent the same house in Afak, a small village five miles from Nippur, which we occupied during the 1957-58 season. He had it cleaned and our furniture from storage at Nuffar installed when we arrived on October 14.

At the mound itself our foreman, Mohammed Abdul Rahman, had readied the house for the Sharqati pickmen from northern Iraq. The day after our arrival the tools were sorted, counted, and new hizzas (sacks for carrying earth) were made. The next day ten local workmen were hired to help assemble the railroad. On Tuesday, October 18 work began on the mound with a force of about 45 men. On the following Saturday this number was increased to 65.

Inanna and her abode at Nippur are old friends of ours. In 1951-52 a deep trench located the building and exploratory tunnels provided a door socket with a dedicatory inscription. In 1953-54 we were busy working chiefly on another part of Nippur but found time, nevertheless to dig out a couple of rooms as a foretaste of things to come. In 1955-56 we devoted our full time to the temple but made a miscalculation. What we had thought to be the length of the building was actually its width and we were faced with a huge mound which we had hoped would not need to be touched. In 1957-58 we started from the top on the southern portion and excavated temples from the Parthian period

(ca. 200 B.C.) through the Third Dynasty of Ur (ca. 2000 B.C.) that covered an area greater than that of a football field. Below the Ur III level we found a smaller temple (ca. 80 x 275 feet) dating to the end of the Early Dynastic II period (ca. 2700 B.C.). By this time we were more than 25 feet below the top of the hillock where the Parthian temple had been discovered.

This season we are back again to pick up the threads and to excavate the temple down to its prehistoric beginning. From a test pit dug last season we know that we are still more than 35 feet above the present-day water table. At the water table virgin soil still had not been attained.

To pick up the threads again was not easy. While we were away Enlil's winds had covered the entire temple with sand dunes some of which were eight to ten feet high. We wanted to bulldoze the sand out of the area but no such machine was available. We fell back, therefore, to the familiar method, an unending procession of men carrying the sand up to the dump cars on our hand-operated field railroad. It works. Three weeks after the beginning of the digging the area was free of sand.

In the excavations we have been clearing the temple level (level VII) exposed last season to its lowest floors. In most rooms nearly a meter of thin clay floor coverings had been laid during the life of the building. At the same time a coat of thin mud plaster was applied to the walls so that, as the floors rose, the walls became thicker and thicker. Some minor changes were made, but essentially the plan remained the same. In another week the level should be completed, mapped, photographed, and then destroyed. The same process will be repeated over and over until we reach the first temple built on the site. With luck, we hope to do this before we run out of either of those two ever-present constants: time and money.

Usually the first weeks of digging provide little excitement with regard to objects. We have been fortunate this year. Just over a week ago as we were breaking through the lowest floor of a small room we uncovered a whole collection of temple objects which had been discarded when the temple was rebuilt. There are approximately 15 alabaster and limestone box-like bases with square or circular holes in the top. The bases are rectangular, rectangular with rounded ends, square, and circular in plan. They vary in size from 3.5 x 3.5 x 2.5 cms. to 8.5 x 10.5 x 7.5 cms. Each one has one, two, three, or four holes about 2 cms. in diameter and 2-3 cms. deep. Many are undecorated or have only an encircling rope design but a few have a band of bitumen and mother-of-pearl inlay on the top surface. The sides of two and the fragment of a third have bas-reliefs: one with recumbent bulls on all four sides, one with animals and with human figures, and a fragment with figures of humans only. In addition to these pieces there are two stone vessels, fragments of a limestone plaque, three small fragments of small statuettes, two limestone inlays made in the form of the forepart of a recumbent ram and bull, two pieces of mother-of-pearl inlay in the form of skirts, one cuneiform tablet (Early Dynastic), beads, shells, flints, and sherds of stone vessels. Some of the objects are well-preserved; others are

incrusted; many are broken or fragmentary. The room where the objects were found is a small one opening off a large room west of the southernmost courtyard. It in no way contributes to the circulation in the building and a door socket on the small-room side indicates its private character. It should not be presumed, therefore, that similar objects are to be found below other rooms of this very openly planned building.

(The following excerpts come from the latest, by several days, of the reports mentioned in the foreword. This portion is dated November 15. V.E.C.)

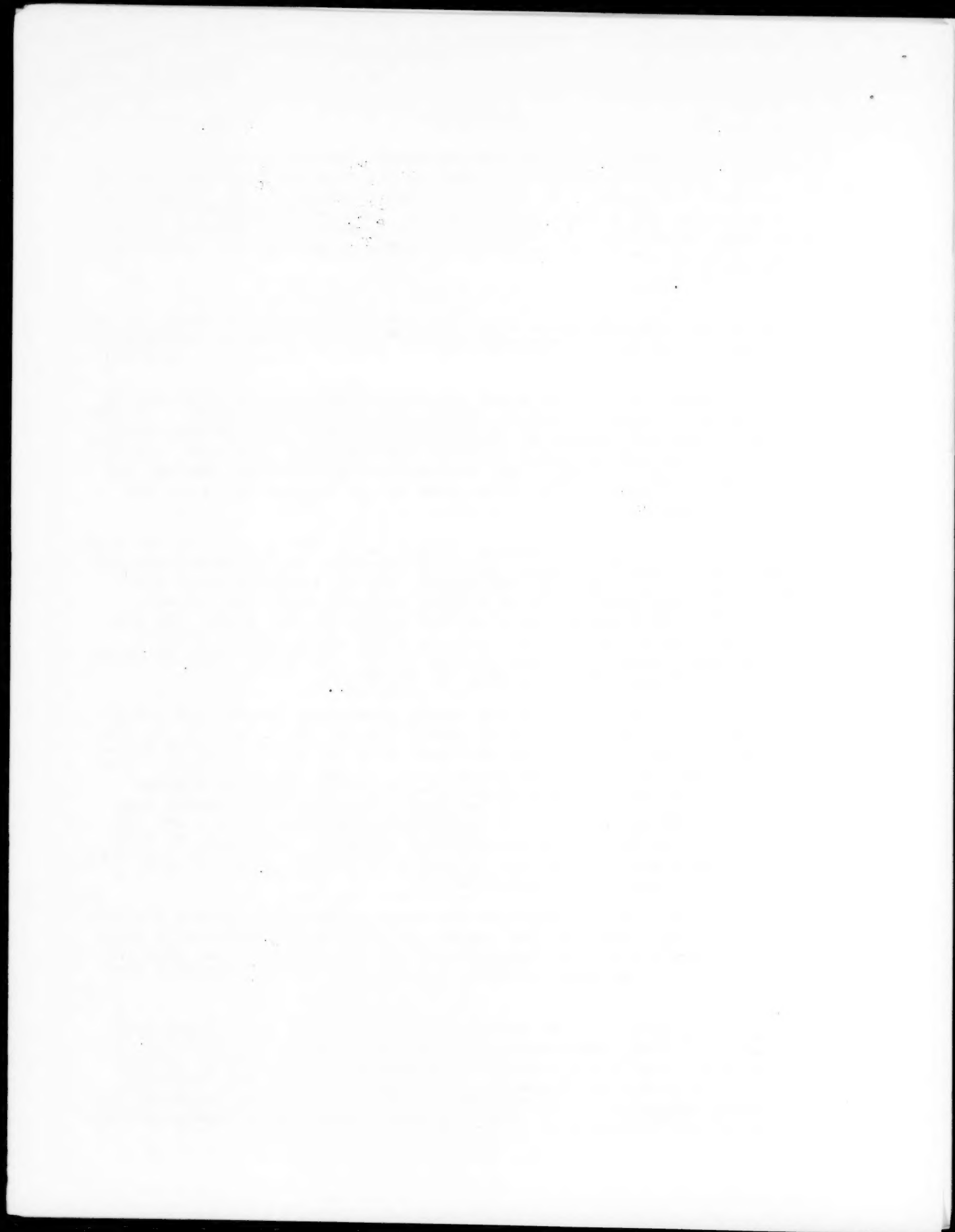
All of the level VII temple north of the cellae (cf. Archaeology 12 (1959) 75 for a plan of the ED II temple) has been cleared; we are now digging out the floors of the cellae and the rooms around them. In order to free the southern part of the building, the area had to be enlarged on three sides. The Parthian fill has been removed and we are ready to trace the outside face of the temple walls on the east, south, and west.

There is little structural change within level VII except on the west central side of the building. Late in its use, the building was expanded westward to create an additional row of rooms on that side. It was built over part of an adjoining structure and the street, which bounded the northern part of the temple on the west, was continued southward to what seems to be a large open area. However, there are sufficient minor changes to divide the level into an upper (VII A) and a lower (VII B) series of floors....

The four columns in the north and south porticoes facing the southernmost courtyard were rebuilt at level VII A. At level VII B, two additional columns parallel to the east wall of the courtyard indicate a continuation of the north portico along the east side. The southernmost bay of the east porch is paved with bitumen-covered baked bricks which connect with a similar area in the eastern most bay of the southern portico. A thin screening wall blocks off the other two bays of the south portico and makes it necessary to enter upon the bitumen-covered square of baked bricks in order to gain admission to the area of the sanctuaries.

The exterior face of the straight-axis cella has wide corner pilasters; the antecella has smaller corner pilasters and additional ones at the entrance and at the midpoint of the two side walls. The bent-axis cella has a flat wall surface broken only by the recessed entrance.

Although there have been no collections of objects like the one we mentioned last time, the rooms have not been sterile. So far this month we have found a rather good cylinder seal, two early stamp seals, two fragments of plaques (one in poor condition), two or three torso fragments of statuettes reused in a paving, an inset in the form of the forepart of a ram, several interesting pendants, and



two stone vessels. We have also recovered one tablet with a plan incised upon it and, in one of the rooms bordering the temple on the west, about fifteen tablets or tablet fragments.

Our crew of eight Sharqatis has been augmented today by three, so the pace of the excavation should increase in the weeks to come.

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